

those who want to deepen their Jewish learning and commitment.

Rabbi Wise plays many roles in promoting the growth of a strong Jewish community and this involvement has been a staple of his career. During his years in New Jersey, Rabbi Wise taught rabbinic literature in the upper-school of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Raritan Valley. An active Zionist, Rabbi Wise also led the first ever Beth El congregational trip to Israel. As the vice president for special programming of the New Jersey Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbi Wise helped organize a spiritual retreat to the Princeton Theological Seminary after the High Holiday Season. Rabbi Wise was also a member of the steering committee for Jewish LIFE, a cooperative body of synagogues and Jewish institutions striving to bring adult learning to the community.

In addition to promoting Jewish education throughout New Jersey, Rabbi Wise has served on the boards of the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County and Ramah Day Camp of Raritan Valley. Rabbi Wise also offered his services as a chaplain to the Franklin Township Police Department in New Jersey.

On behalf of the entire community, I am delighted to welcome Rabbi Wise, his wife, Judy Krinitz, and their two children, Jordana Nechama and Elijah Mordechai to our part of the Big Apple. We look forward to many years of his spiritual leadership as our pastor and our friend. Together, we will continue our efforts to make the Queens Jewish Community a place that our children and families are proud to call our home.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in the House to join me in welcoming and honoring the new spiritual leader of the Hollis Hills Jewish Center, a man of humor, knowledge, and wisdom, Rabbi David Wise. We send him our very best wishes.

THE TRADE PREFERENCE EXTENSION AND EXPANSION ACT

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today Representative JEFFERSON, Representative McDERMOTT and I are introducing the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act. There are three key aspects to this legislation.

First, the act would extend for 1 year the trade benefits provided to developing countries under the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences ("GSP") and the Andean Trade Preference Act ("ATPA"). Both of these programs currently are scheduled to expire at the end of 2006. Our trade preference programs are critical, not just to workers and businesses in developing countries, but to U.S. workers and businesses. It is important that we extend these programs immediately in order to provide our trading partners, as well as U.S. manufacturers and retailers, the predictability necessary to make business and investment decisions for the future.

I have heard some of my colleagues suggest that we should let these programs lapse in order to pressure our trading partners to agree to the demands of U.S. negotiators in ongoing bilateral and multilateral trade nego-

tiations. I agree with my colleagues that we should be seeking the best deals possible with each of our trading partners. However, I disagree with the notion that the United States should threaten all of our developing country trading partners, many of which are struggling to pull themselves out of poverty, with the elimination of current trade benefits in an ill-considered attempt to strengthen our hand at the negotiating table.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that our current trade preference programs should never be changed to reflect new realities in trade and the rules of the WTO. For that reason, the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act calls for only a 1 year extension of GSP and ATPA. It is important to evaluate how well these programs are working for workers and businesses both in the United States and developing countries—and to consider whether changes should be made to improve the programs. In fact, Representative McDERMOTT, Representative JEFFERSON and I sent a letter to Chairman THOMAS today requesting that the Ways and Means Committee hold hearings as soon as possible to consider the future of GSP and ATPA, as well as the African Growth and Opportunity Act ("AGOA"). I believe it is important that the Congress and all interested stakeholders begin to investigate and consider this issue immediately, as it is likely that Congress will make changes to these programs next year in order to implement agreements negotiated as part of the Doha Development Agenda round of World Trade Organization negotiations.

The second key aspect of the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act is the extension and expansion of benefits provided to sub-Saharan Africa under AGOA. In the year since the expiration of global textile and apparel quotas, sub-Saharan Africa's exports to the United States of apparel fell by 16 percent, and the sector has lost as many as 100,000 jobs. Further, the textile and apparel industries in sub-Saharan Africa face many challenges beyond the elimination of global quotas, including competition from well-established and sometimes subsidized producers, such as China, and inadequate infrastructure and other supply-side constraints.

In recognition of these challenges, the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act would extend until December 2007, the current duty-free benefits provided under AGOA for apparel made in least developed African countries from third country fabric. If this benefit is not extended, it will be reduced in half on October 1 of this year, putting at risk the fledgling apparel industries that have provided vitally needed jobs and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Act also would establish a simpler, value-added rule of origin for apparel and extend additional benefits to the textile and agricultural sectors under AGOA. These provisions are intended to enable the textile and apparel industries in sub-Saharan Africa to compete, given the current market reality in the region, which is that African textile mills cannot generally produce fabric in sufficient quantity and variety to meet the needs of African apparel producers or market demand. In addition, these provisions are intended to promote sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa by promoting the diversification of the economies of countries in the region, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Representative McDERMOTT, Representative JEFFERSON and I have put forward these ideas regarding the expansion of benefits for textile, apparel and agricultural products under AGOA as a way to start a discussion among other Members and stakeholders about the best way to promote sustainable economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. We recognize that sub-Saharan Africa faces a wide variety of challenges and that there are potentially several different approaches that could be taken to promote the long-term health of the region. We look forward to working with our colleagues, interested parties in the private sector and civil society, and AGOA country governments to gather additional information about the best ways to address the challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa today, and we stand ready to work in Congress to ensure that the United States continues to play a leadership role in promoting economic development in the region.

The third key aspect of the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act is a Sense of the Congress resolution calling on the President to make a determination as soon as possible regarding the extension of AGOA benefits to Liberia. The October 2005 elections in Liberia represented a key step in building peace in Liberia, following nearly two decades of civil war. Further, the election of Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as President of Liberia marks an important milestone for Africa, as President Johnson Sirleaf is the first elected female President in African history. President Johnson Sirleaf has laid out a multifaceted government agenda emphasizing security, public and private-sector led revitalization, good governance and anti-corruption efforts, regional and international cooperation, and political reconciliation and inclusiveness. President Sirleaf Johnson also has made the improvement of workers rights a high priority. In light of recent progress in Liberia and need to promote economic growth in the country, I believe it is important that the President extend AGOA benefits to Liberia as soon as possible.

I urge my colleagues to join Representatives McDERMOTT, JEFFERSON and me in supporting the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act.

THE COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that a Washington-based non-governmental organization—the Coalition for International Justice—will close its offices this week after 10 years of service to the cause of justice around the world.

Serving as Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Commission for that same period of time, I have worked closely with the Coalition and seen the effect of its work. Ten years ago, the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a priority in U.S. foreign policy, a conflict in which numerous war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide were committed. Many of us fought for the inclusion of basic justice as an element in our country's policy response, and an international tribunal was fortunately created for that purpose. At the time,

however, support was lukewarm at best; many saw efforts to apprehend and bring to justice those responsible for heinous crimes as too far-reaching, perhaps unachievable, and potentially detrimental to efforts to end the conflict through diplomacy.

The Coalition for International Justice was a tireless advocate of another view, one that saw no true peace, nor the resulting long-term stability, in Bosnia or anywhere else, without appropriate consideration of justice. Time has since shown how correct that view has been. Bosnia and Herzegovina has come a long way since the mid-1990s, in large part because those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide were instead removed from positions of authority and made accountable at the tribunal located in The Hague. Many of those people might still be at large had the Coalition, among others, not advocated a tough policy toward those powers who were harboring and protecting them. Many of us can remember the State Department's hesitancy, let alone that of many European foreign ministries, to these tough measures. Today, however, the United States maintains an effective conditionality on assistance to Serbia and, along with the European Union, on Serbia's integration efforts due to the particular failure to transfer Ratko Mladic to The Hague. Similar linkages apply to another at-large indictee, Radovan Karadzic.

Representatives of the Coalition for International Justice participated in numerous briefings and hearings of the Helsinki Commission on this subject, and were always available to provide useful information when justice in the Balkans became part of our policy debates.

The Coalition similarly assisted the international criminal tribunal established for Rwanda in its efforts to be fair, responsible and effective in the provision of justice. Its mandate later expanded to help the investigation and prosecutions process in East Timor, to establish a tribunal for Khmer Rouge crimes in Cambodia, and to create a Special Court for Sierra Leone. It helped track the finance of such notorious figures as Charles Taylor, Saddam Hussein and the Khartoum elites, in addition to Slobodan Milosevic and Radovan Karadzic. Most recently, the Coalition has been part of the international effort not just to hold those responsible for the genocide in Darfur accountable from the crimes already committed but to protect the civilian population there from continuing to be victimized.

Mr. Speaker, I have appreciated the work of the Coalition for International Justice as a resource of accurate information, and as an advocate to a reasonable, practical approach to the sometimes controversial subject of international justice. While its board and staff may have concluded that the Coalition has largely accomplished the tasks it was created to address, they know, as do we, that horrible crimes continue to be committed against innocent people in conflicts around the world. I am confident that the dedicated individuals who made the Coalition such a success will continue, through other organizations and offices, in the struggle for international justice.

A TRIBUTE TO THE HEIGHTS PLAYERS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a talented and distinguished community theater group, the Heights Players, as they embark upon their 50th anniversary. It is an honor to represent the Heights Players in the House of Representatives and it behooves us to pay tribute to such an outstanding community organization that has brought the art of performance to adults and children throughout Brooklyn.

Mr. Speaker, the Heights Players were founded in 1956 by a small collection of theatre-lovers and successfully produced their first production, *Hasty Heart*, in February of 1957. The Heights Players eventually established themselves as a nonprofit educational corporation of New York, offering a workshop program and expanding the group to extend opportunities to new performers and directors.

For the past 50 years, the Heights Players have continued to assume an active role in the community by presenting performances for homeless groups, senior citizens and hospital-bound children. In 1962, the Heights Players moved to their current location at the historic 26 Willow Place in the basement of the Alfred T. White Community Center. The Heights Players, under their Board of Directors, continuously seek to enhance the quality of their performances, facilities, and organization.

The Heights Players now enjoy a large membership of 200 subscribers and a group mailing list of 2,500 supporters, including those from the Brooklyn Heights Community along with the tri-state area. The Heights Players also continue to provide special Theater for Children performances, traveling entertainment to Brooklyn hospitals, nursing homes, and Hale House in Manhattan, and special performances to nearly 1,000 homeless New Yorkers annually. They have been awarded for their ongoing laudable community efforts by Brooklyn Borough President Abe Stark, the Brooklyn Heights Association, the City Council, and Borough President Howard Golden, who designated April 4, 1987, as "Heights Players Day."

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent on this body to recognize the achievements and committed service of the Heights Players as they continue to offer their artistic talents and performances for the benefit of the community.

Mr. Speaker, may our country continue to benefit from the actions of altruistic community leaders such as the Heights Players.

AFRICA'S LEADING LADY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first elected female president of Liberia, for her straightforward opinion that addresses jurisdictional control for prosecutorial legal action against

Charles Taylor, the accused butcher and mutilator of thousands of Africans during one of the deadliest and bloodiest regimes of modern day Liberia and four other African states.

I enter into the RECORD an article from the New York Daily News entitled "Africa's Leading Lady" which reveals that African women are coming to the fore, trying to right all of the wrongs put and held in place by a succession of brutal and corrupt African men. Emphasis is placed on the atrocities carried out by Taylor and his followers and mentions how Taylor's greed has "casually" reduced Liberia to a pauper state.

I personally believe that Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, also known as the "Iron Lady" for her determination and tenacity, is the very best person to lead Liberia from its dark, tormented past into a bright and productive future.

[From the New York Daily News, Mar. 30, 2006]

AFRICA'S LEADING LADY: PRESIDENT'S GUTSY MOVE VS. WARLORD TEACHES VALUABLE LESSON

(By Stanley Crouch)

When Charles Taylor, the ex-Liberian thug president, was arrested in Nigeria trying to escape the clutches of international law, he was in a car with 110-pound bags of embezzled money. Well, he was not traveling light.

Taylor had risen to power after seven years of civil war, had won an election with 75% of the vote and had casually reduced his country to a pauper state. He is accused of starting conflicts in four other African states and encouraging the chopping off of hands, feet, lips and noses in Sierra Leone so that the terrified population would not hinder the sale of stolen diamonds.

Taylor is one of those African butchers who could have modeled himself on King Leopold II, the 19th-century Belgian king. Leopold's colonial policies in the Congo resulted in countless slaughters and many mutilations in the interest of producing a profitable rubber crop.

Leopold became a pariah among European courts, but naturally black-faced variations in Africa have wielded iron-fisted power without compunction, worrying only about being overthrown by some ambitious fellow monster in the military. If given the time, these monsters have fled to another African country, or to the Arab states, or even to the French Riviera, where they have been able to cool out and impress everyone with their pilfered riches.

As the Taylor case has proven, that trend in African politics may be coming to a screeching halt. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first elected female president in all of Africa, had requested that Nigeria hand over Taylor to the authorities in Sierra Leone, where he would have to face charges of individual butchery, mutilation and crimes against humanity.

African women are coming to the fore, trying to right all of the wrongs put and held in place by a succession of brutal and corrupt African men. African justice has been as porous as Swiss cheese for more than 40 years and the African people have suffered enormously while black Americans in or out of elected office, in or out of the civil rights establishment, have either ignored the horrors wrought upon the people or have figured out ways to blame it all on others.

The women of Africa are more interested in dealing with the facts than maintaining a cosmetic front of innocence. In a number of places across Africa, we see women rooting out corruption and conceiving laws that will bring them closer to a standard of human equality.